

*Christopher Caszatt
Lansing, MI
Testimony on SB 516-618*

January 12, 2010

Hon. Wayne Kuipers, Chairman
Senate Judiciary Committee and
Senate Judiciary Committee Members

My name is Christopher Caszatt. I have invested in and am in the process of developing a non-profit organization that provides support for state-registered medical cannabis caregivers and their patients. Spiderhaus was founded in response to the enactment of the Michigan Medical Marihuana Act of 2008 that legalized the use of cannabis for specific medical purposes. A certification process to determine patients' eligibility for its use and a like process for registration of caregivers who provide cannabis for them was developed to regulate it.

The law allows caregivers to grow cannabis for up to six patients. By its nature, this restriction in the law facilitated an ever-expanding network of small entrepreneurs.

I oppose Senate Bill 618 because of the adverse impact that it would have on these new small businesses, their owners, their families and the communities where we contribute both money and jobs to local economies.

I am a registered patient and a registered caregiver. As a registered patient, I am allowed to use cannabis to control my chronic pain. As a registered caregiver, I am allowed to grow cannabis and supply it for other patients. So far, over 2,000 other caregivers in Michigan have started similar businesses.

However, starting a business requires a substantial financial commitment. My business partner and I invested in necessary equipment, materials and facility designs. Within a few months we will have our paperwork completed and filed and we will begin to realize a return on our investment. In the future, we hope that we will also begin to help raise needed tax revenues for the state.

If Senate Bill 618, SEC. 17790. (1) ...NO MORE THAN 10 MEDICAL MARIHUANA GROWING FACILITIES SHALL BE ISSUED A LICENSE UNDER THIS SECTION DURING ANY 1-YEAR PERIOD... is enacted, it will limit the number of medical cannabis growers to ten in the entire state of Michigan. Small entrepreneurs would either be taken over by large interests or be forced out of the industry altogether. SB 618 would provide for the industry's takeover by large agribusinesses. At risk of compromising high quality for higher pricing and profit motives these near-monopolies would undermine the fiber of a new industry currently comprised of enterprising individuals. It would threaten their commitment to providing high quality medication at affordable prices for patients who need it.

Thank you for considering my testimony.